

# FREE 2 SUCCEED



**D4 NEWSLETTER**

April 2019



## APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

For National Volunteer month we would like to thank all of our volunteers who make this program possible. This newsletter includes testimonies from individuals who want to recognize their mentor. Anyone who has participated in any aspect of this program should be able to relate to one of the narratives below. We understand how much time and energy you give to your mentees, even, or especially, when things can seem challenging or frustrating, but you keep showing up! Whether you are new to the program, have mentored one person, or over a dozen, please know we are so grateful for you.

**THANK YOU!**

Jeff G. agreed to mentor Don B. in 2016 while he was still incarcerated. Over two years into their mentorship they continue to meet weekly.

"I can't say enough about Jeff, he has been a wonderful mentor. He is a super support and provides me encouragement. He inspired me to give back and become a mentor."

Thank you Jeff and Don!

### **YOU'RE INVITED**

**Roundtable discussion on boundaries, mentoring a sex offender, resources, and first day.**

**May 7th, 6:30-8:30 PM  
at Correctional Industries**

INFORMATION ON BECOMING OR APPLYING FOR A MENTOR MAY BE FOUND AT:  
[HTTPS://WWW.IDOC.IDAHO.GOV/CONTENT/PRISONS/VOLUNTEERS\\_MENTORS](https://www.idoc.idaho.gov/content/prisons/volunteers_mentors)

**"THE BEST TEACHERS ARE THOSE WHO TELL YOU WHERE TO LOOK, BUT DON'T TELL YOU WHAT TO SEE."**

## **RENEE & SHEILA**

A couple weeks after being released Renee G had come to her tipping point with her transitional housing and wanted to just get away. She had also missed her kids and wanted to see them. Around 10:00 PM she called a friend to come and pick her up and left the transitional housing without permission. While she was waiting for her ride, she called her mentor, Sheila W, and told her she was done living in the transitional housing and was leaving. When Renee had called Sheila she did it so she could say, "I called my mentor and tried but she didn't answer or reacted this way", almost as a safety net to say she tried to reach out to her support system and the interaction failed so she still fled. Sheila reacted the complete opposite and asked where Renee was and drove to her right away and sat with her for quite a while talking everything through. Sheila helped Renee see the situations she was going through in a new light. After their conversation, Renee went back to the halfway house and was let back in. If it wasn't for her mentor, Renee doesn't know where she would be right now. Thank you Sheila!



Attendees of the MentHER meeting on April 13th. At the meeting, women who have experienced incarceration shared their perspectives on being a mentor and how to connect. One thing they stressed was encouraging female mentees to trust that their mentor wants the best for them, even if they aren't ready to trust their mentor. Thank you to those who attended and helped out!

**IF YOU HAVE A STORY YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE FEATURED  
PLEASE SEND IT TO [EMILLER@IDOC.IDAHO.GOV](mailto:EMILLER@IDOC.IDAHO.GOV)**

**"IF YOU CANNOT SEE WHERE YOU ARE GOING, ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE BEFORE."**



**Venessa and her mentee Karlie**

Venessa is an amazing and strong woman and she has been a blessing in my life. She is not only my mentor, but my friend. She has helped me in so many ways. She supports me and is always there if I need to talk. She has a great personality and a heart of gold. She even gave me a ride to the hospital one day when I called her up out of the blue, and stayed with me until she absolutely had to go. I am grateful for the Mentor Program for introducing me to such a wonderful woman. She truly deserves to be Mentor of the Year.

She is selfless and dedicated and I am grateful to have her in my life.

~Submitted by Karlie G

I'm not really good at this kind of thing, but Venessa is such an amazing mentor and friend. I have known her for many years and I am so proud of how far she has come. At first I was hesitant on having a mentor because its something new. I am blessed to have Venessa in my life. She is always there when I need her. When I'm having a bad day she helps me think things through.

When I first got released and was struggling on finding a job she used her connections to help get my foot in the door. I am very thankful for all her help and she is definitely my role mode!

~Submitted by Crystal C

Congratulations to Heather Davis for receiving a Gold Seal. Heather initially was a mentee and recently became a mentor—this is what we love to see from all our mentees.

Congratulations and thank you, Heather!

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**“MY MENTOR SAID, ‘LET’S GO DO IT,’ NOT  
‘YOU GO DO IT.’ HOW POWERFUL WHEN  
SOMEONE SAYS, ‘LET’S!’” – JIM ROHN**

## **A LETTER TO A MENTOR**

Hi my name is John and most of you don't know me, but this is about a mentor that was a mentor way before this program started. When I got out of prison years ago a man volunteered to pick me up. He met me with a smile, a handshake, and a joke. He took me everywhere I needed to go, which was especially helpful because I'm not from around here and had no idea where I was. From that day on we hit it off and our friendship grew and continues to grow. He started volunteering when he got out of prison and since has picked up hundreds of people and taken them where they needed to go. I watched him put over 130,000 miles on a van in less than a year in Boise alone. He does it from the goodness and kindness of his heart! He listens to what someone has to say and thinks about what he might say before he says it. He is gentle and soft-spoken, never gets upset or impatient. He will help you figure things out, no matter the problem. He was one of the first mentors to sign up with Free2Succeed and because of him I became a mentor. I could keep going for a long time but I will say this: Free2Succeed is lucky to have him as a mentor and they need many more like him. I am pleased and proud to call Zehn Curtis my friend!

~Submitted by John Wallette

A quick thank you to our VISTA Leader and VISTA Site Coordinators across the state who are all AmeriCorps volunteers.

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**"A MENTOR IS SOMEONE WHO ALLOWS YOU TO SEE THE HOPE INSIDE YOURSELF." – OPRAH WINFREY**



Craig and Sandie Nelson have been with the program for several years, mentoring over a dozen women. They have been matched with Anna T since May 2017. Here is what Anna had to say about the Nelsons.

I met Craig and Sandie while still incarcerated – they were volunteers who came for gospel discussions. Approaching release they expressed the desire to mentor me. I was very grateful as I didn't have family or contacts in the area after my long incarceration. The day you are released is a very strange experience – like returning from being lost in the desert- no belongings, no roof over your head, literally not a pot to cook in. The Nelson's picked me up and chauffeured me around to obtain the necessities: clothes, bedding, food, maps, phone, etc. They talked me through my panic and insecurities, made the whole day lighthearted and bright, even bringing up the need to be centered and aware of the glass being half full.

Since I am a member of their denomination they continued to invite me to their congregation. They would come and get me even though they live clear across town. They opened their home and family to me – always pointing the right way, talking things through. They encouraged me to participate in recovery groups and made sure that I was experiencing life activities so that I would be interacting and not hiding. On my first birthday out Craig was VERY insistent that it be recognized and that I have candles and sing happy birthday, birthdays are not my friend, but they made sure they were.

The Nelsons are always excited about my mile stones and progress. They have been there through: job loss, horrendous court appearances, moves and more. I love these people, they follow a higher plane than others. They embody the term mentor as their way of life, as one that you would want to follow: giving and nonjudgmental. They have been through thick and thin, smiling, happy, and always there. ~Submitted by Anna T

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**"IT'S EASY TO MAKE A BUCK. IT'S A LOT TOUGHER  
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE." - TOM BROKAW**

*thank  
you*

**THANK  
YOU**

*THANK  
YOU*

Devon A	Robert F	Anna K	Mark P
Donald B	Barbara G	Donald K	Jae P
Christina B	Paul G	Douglas K	David R
Bridget B	Josephine G	Cyann K	Stephanie R
Mallory B	Jim G	John L	Sue R
Douglas B	Marilynn G	Rob L	Paul R
Curtis B	Sam G	Roger L	Dan R
Bambi C	Jeff G	Brent L	Michael S
Bruce C	Angela H	Karen L	Venessa S
Leslie C	Brent H	Katie L	Eric T
Zehn C	Jamie H	Brandi L	Michael T
Mike D	Connie H	Nancy L	Carrie V
Heather D	Scott H	Chris M	John W
Brandon D	Mike H	Brian M	Jake W
Jonathan D	Ed H	Justin M	Bruce W
Paul E	Heidi H	Nek'ka M	Jason W
Ragan E	Michelle J	Craig N	Laura W
Ryan E	Tamarr J	Sandie N	Greg W
Richard E	Jay J	Derrell N	Sheila W
Richard F	Gayle J	Roy O	Scott Y
Monica F	Steven J	Cheryl P	Jason Z
		James P	

**As of April 2019 we have 85 mentors just in District 4 who have recorded 1,604 hours over a 6 month period. A thank you to our mentors and your loved ones who also make sacrifices for the program. We appreciate you!**

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